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It is pointed out that change in rural education has been slow to occur but that attention to change strategies can hasten the process of change. Discussion includes a perusal of the literature, slow rate of diffusion in education, innovation from within or without, relating research to practice, typology of linking roles, change strategies, the change agent, and dissemination of information. Emphasis is placed upon the need for an intermediate role which could serve the "linking" function between the researcher and the practitioner. A typology of linking roles is developed. It is suggested that strategy for changing rural education should rely heavily on logic, reason, persuasion, showing, helping, involving, appeal to values and training, to the relative exclusion of telling, force, compulsion, intervention, and deprivation. It is indicated that sophisticated strategies for improving rural education will require the training and deployment of change specialists. It is concluded that some strategies will be required to change the thinking of rural legislators. (SW)

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STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

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Delivered at NFIRE Conference, Denver
March 19, 1969

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Combining Uniqueness with Purpose

STRATEGIES FOR CHANGE IN RURAL COMMUNITIES

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When one accepts the assignment to speak to a group such as NFIRE on the subject of Strategies for Change in Rural Communities, he does so with some trepidation. This is especially true when the assignment is accepted in full knowledge that his presentation is the last of a three-day program which has consisted of the who's who of rural education in America. I have taken consolation in the assumption that I work best under pressure. I shall now test that assumption.

There would seem to be little need to build a case to establish the need for change in education, particularly rural education. The need is obvious. Change is in the wind. Since change and innovation have become bywords in education, there may be some need to strike a precautionary note. We are aware that some educators may be promoting change for the sake of change. For American education not to change may be fatal; for changes to be effected without adequate regard for ultimate goals and purposes may be equally dangerous. Sieber and many others have cautioned against too hasty adoption of innovation.[1] One can assert, not entirely facetiously, that with respect to improvement in education, "technology is the answer--but what was the question?" We definitely do not support change for the sake of change.

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[1]Sam D. Sieber, "Organizational Influences on Innovative Roles," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchel, editors, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), p. 121.

A perusal of the literature on change strategies quickly shows that our knowledge of change is at a relatively primitive state. Robert Chin has written:

> We are in a primitive stage for creating a body of knowledge for affecting change that is relevant to the existing conditions and problems, that includes the processes for arriving at mutually constructed goals, that has spelled out methods and procedures, and that advances the problem towards these directions.[2]

Much has been written about planning for change, but as Hansen points out:

> There are almost as many strategies, procedures, methodologies and approaches to planning for change as there are scholars in the field and practitioners of the art.[3]

There are a great many theories and models for change. It is also true that there is considerable contradiction in the use of terms relating to the change process. Rogers has defined the innovator as one of the first 2.5 percent of an audience to adopt a new idea.[4] But Howsam defines the innovator as the person who invents the change,[5] while Woods defines innovation as planned, systematic change which the individual perceives as

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[2]Robert Chin, "Basic Strategies and Procedures in Effecting Change," Planning and Effecting Needed Changes in Education, Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, editors, (Denver: Third Area Conference, Designing Education for the Future, 1967), p. 56.

[3]Kenneth H. Hansen, "Planning for Changes in Education," Planning and Effecting Needed Changes in Education, Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, editors, (Denver: Third Area Conference, Designing Education for the Future, 1967), p. 25.

[4]Everett M. Rogers, "What Are Innovators Like," Change Process in the Public Schools, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965), p. 56

[5]Robert B. Howsam, "Effecting Needed Changes in Education," Planning and Effecting Needed Changes in Education, Edgar L. Morphet and Charles O. Ryan, editors, (Denver: Third Area Conference, Designing Education for the Future, 1967), p. 71.

a new way of doing something.[6] Howsam defines the adopter as one who accepts a changed way of behavior,[7] while Woods sees adoption as being a decision of a person to make full use of an innovation.[8]

One could continue to cite differences and discrepancies in the definition and use of terms relating to the change process, but no purpose would be served other than to make the observation that we should work toward common agreement on the definition and use of change-related terms. That certainly is not my purpose today.

Having cited the difficulties involved in dealing with the literature on change and having begged off the task of offering a much needed and internally consistent set of definitions relating to the change process, I will proceed to discuss some considerations from the literature on change as they relate to rural education.

Slow Rate of Diffusion in Education

Although the rate of diffusion of innovations in education seems to be quickening,[9] it is still true that, in general, education has been notoriously slow in effecting needed change. One reason for this probably has to do with the domestication of the public schools. Schools cannot choose their clients and the clients must accept the service provided by

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[6]Thomas E. Woods, The Administration of Educational Innovation, (Eugene: Bureau of Educational Research, University of Oregon, May, 1967), p. 9.

[7]Howsam, loc. cit.

[8]Woods, loc. cit.

[9]Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe), p. 23.

the public schools. There is no struggle for existence, survival is guaranteed, and funds are not tied to quality of performance. Consequently, in such a stable environment there has resulted a lack of interest in change or recognition of its need.[10]

Pellegrin has pointed out that innovative organizations are those that create conditions which allow innovative individuals to operate in a facilitating setting.[11] Certainly, this is not a description of the typical rural school. Lippitt has suggested reasons why change in education is different and more complex than it is in other fields. Included are the facts that: changes in attitudes of practitioners are usually required; innovations in education are often invisible and undocumented; there is a lack of a professional network for innovators and change agents; teachers often repress colleagues who desire to effect change; and educators often fear expected reactions against experiementation from parents, school boards, and the public.[12]

While there may be very good and clear reasons why desired change in education has been slow to occur, if we would treat the general question of change strategies for rural education, we must treat with the reasons.

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[10]Richard D. Carlson, "Barriers to Change in Public Schools," Change Process in the Public Schools, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965), p. 6.

[11]R. J. Pellegrin, "Educational Organizations and Problems of Innovation," Seminar Series for School Administrators, Change and Innovation, Robert B. Carson, editor, (Calgary: Department of Educational Administration, The University of Calgary, 1968), p. 37.

[12]Ronald Lippitt, "Roles and Processes in Curriculum Development and Change," Papers from the ASCD Seminar on Strategy for Curriculum Change, (Washington, D. C.: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1965).

Innovation from Within or Without?

A recurring question which appears in the literature is whether educational innovation is best accomplished from within or from without the system. Mackenzie has stated specifically that educators are not the ones who get things started, but rather that foundations, writers, people with national visibility give impetus to the adoption of new ideas.[13] We might reflect on the impact of Sputnik on the teaching of science and mathematics in our schools, or on the influence on programs of driver education by the promotional efforts of car dealers.[14] One could argue the case that most educators change by reaction to external forces. It is still true, however, that persons within the educational system are in a position to impede the change. Any viable change strategy must, therefore, take into consideration both the external stimulus applied to the educational system and the attitudes and receptivity to change of the practitioners in the system.

There is some disagreement among expert opinion as to the proper and desirable role of the school administrator in the change process. It is generally agreed that teachers are usually not effective change agents. Brickle has stated the case forcefully:

> ...teachers are not change-agents for innovations of major scope. Even when free to guide their own activities, teachers

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[13]Gordon N. Mackenzie, "Curricular Change: Participants, Power and Process," Innovations in Education, Mathew Miles, editor, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964), p. 24.

[14]Woods, op. cit., p. 23.

> seldom suggest distinctly new types of working patterns for themselves.[15]

Pellegrin,[16] Lazarsfeld and Siever[17] are in agreement that teachers are not effective change agents.

Writers generally see the administrator as the key educational practitioner to be reached if change is to be effected. There seems to be little doubt but that the administrator is strategically situated to block many types of educational change if he is so disposed. Pellegrin has stated the case as follows:

> ...it seems that very little innovation of a substantial nature can be successfully introduced unless the administrative component is involved from the very beginning in the decisions with regard to innovation--and not only involved but committed and highly motivated to make these changes a success.[18]

Some would argue that the administrator may be too precariously situated to assume the role of change agent. Carlson has pointed out that "being in and of the organization, the function of change advocacy for the school superintendent is difficult because he frequently must prescribe the change of his own practices."[19] Gallaher, too, questioned seriously

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[15]Henry M. Brickle, "State Organization for Educational Change: A Case Study and Proposal," Innovations in Education, Mathew B. Miles, editor, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964), p. 503.

[16]Pellegrin, op. cit., p. 43

[17]Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Sam D. Sieber, "Problems of Educational Research," Society and Education, James R. Raths and Jean Dresden Grambs, (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1965), p. 272.

[18]Pellegrin, op. cit., p. 45.

[19]Carlson, op. cit., p. 4.

whether the administrator's role should involve a strong element of change advocacy.[20] On the other hand, Brickle has found that such innovations as had occurred in New York State has been initiated by administrators.[21]

It would seem apparent, then, that no matter what the degree of precariousness of his position, the administrator must be involved intimately in the change process if it is to occur. Pellegrin has suggested that both teachers and administrators tend to overestimate parental, board, and public resistance to change efforts.[22] It may be worth venturing the belief that school administrators who are fired because they were too zealous in the implementation of desirable change are much in demand in more progressive school districts.

The Linking Role

A number of writers cite the need for an intermediary role between the researcher and the practitioner. Carter,[23] Guba,[24] and

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[20]Art Gallaher, Jr., "Directed Change in Formal Organizations: The School System," Change Processes in the Public Schools, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1965), p. 50.

[21]Brickle, op. cit.

[22]Pellegrin, op. cit., p. 41.

[23]Launor F. Carter, "Knowledge Production and Utilization in Contemporary Organizations," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchell, editors, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), p. 17.

[24]Egon G. Guba, "Development, Diffusion and Evaluation," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchell, editors, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), p. 39.

Havelock[25] are three who have written of the "linking" function which relates research to practice. Havelock has developed a typology of linking roles which include: the conveyor, the consultant, the trainer, the leader, the innovator, the defender, the knowledge builder as linker, the practitioner as linker, and the user as linker.[26]

A brief description of each type of linker is pertinent here.

> The conveyor passes knowledge from expert sources to non-expert potential users without particularly altering the form in which the knowledge is received. Conveyors receive very low valuation from researchers and practitioners alike.[27]

> The consultant tells "how" in contrast to the conveyor who tells simply "what." The consultant usually plays a non-directive role on the assumption the client can tell what is useful for him. The consultant-consultee relationship is usually temporary and specific.[28]

> The trainer works on the assumption that a body of knowledge can be extended through an intensive learning experience. The trainer usually conveys the body of knowledge prior to the time the practitioner enters the work setting. The most vital trainer role is probably the "professor of practice." The trainer usually lacks access to the practitioner after he enters the field setting.[29]

> The leader, in contrast to the conveyor or the consultant, is usually within the practitioner's or receiver's own group. Leaders may be seen as "gate keepers" who control free access to a group of receivers, or "opinion leaders," upon whom a pattern of imitation

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[25]Ronald G. Havelock, "Dissemination and Translation Roles," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchell, editors, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), p. 64.

[26]Ibid., pp. 67-69.

[27]Ibid., pp. 66-71.

[28]Ibid., pp. 72-75.

[29]Ibid., pp. 75-76.

is focused over a period of time. Both gate keepers and opinion leaders may be of either the formal or the informal organization.[30]

The innovator is the first person or persons to adopt a new idea within the system. Innovators often serve as quasi-opinion leaders for the real opinion leader who may be reluctant to stake his reputation on an untested practice. Some innovators may be regarded as "oddball" by the rest of the social system. The relationship between opinion leadership and innovativeness is not consistent.[31]

The defender is the one who champions the client against innovations. Defenders should not necessarily be seen in a negative light, since they can serve a functional purpose of serving to guard against the pitfalls of easy adoption of new ideas and innovations. Defenders do not always contribute a benign influence, however. Some are mere blockers.[32]

The knowledge builder as linker can fall into one of several categories: basic scientist and scholar; applied researcher or developer; the researcher and development manager; or the engineer.[33]

The practitioner may serve as linker if his services reflect new and scientific knowledge which he imparts to the public.[34]

The user serves as linker very rarely as in the case where he, on his own, picks up information from the university or the research literature. A very sophisticated farmer could do this even before the county agent comes around with the information.[35]

Havelock's typology of linking role types is useful for conceptualization, but it is doubtful that we often see a single type, pure and simple. Linking agents usually perform in a combination of the listed "ideal" types. Linking agents, in reality, are able to perform in various ways, i.e., as

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[30] Ibid., pp. 76-80.

[31] Ibid., pp. 80-82

[32] Ibid., pp. 82-84

[33] Ibid., pp. 87-88

[34] Ibid., p. 89.

[35] Ibid., p. 90

conveyors, consultants, defenders, and leader-coordinators for the client system.[36] The county extension agent serves at various times in several of the various linking roles.

Linking Types and Rural Education

Insofar as strategies for change in rural communities are concerned, the following thoughts are offered in relation to Havelock's typology of linking roles.

Conveyor. The conveyor is the most rudimentary of linking types. He neither interprets nor explains, but simply transfers knowledge. He serves essentially the same function as research literature. Since it is fairly well established that most teachers do not read the research literature,[37] the conveyor would not seem to be a particularly valuable linking type in reaching rural education. Neither would the conveyor seem to be of particular value in reaching rural school boards or opinion leaders in rural communities.

Consultant. The consultant's role is usually non-directive; the assumption is that the consultee knows what he seeks. It is suggested that the consultant can provide important service in improving rural education *if and when* his services are sought. This implies that recognition of the need for the consultant's services has been stimulated through some other source. But on the assumption that the need is seen for achieving educational change, the consultant's role is one of potential value.

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[36] *Ibid.*, p. 93

[37] Lazarsfeld and Sieber, *op. cit.*, p. 273

Trainer. The trainer's function is usually performed during the preservice stage. Clearly, there are great implications for the linking role of trainer insofar as preparing future rural educators is concerned. But, according to Havelock's definition of the trainer role, this type of linker can make no impact on present practitioners except indirectly through those who enter service in the near future.

Leader. The leader would appear to be a most important linking type between research and the practice of rural education, particularly as he is of the opinion leader variety. The opinion leader can serve as the "legitimator" of new ideas which are to be brought into rural education.[38] It is held here to be of utmost importance in planning for change in rural schools to identify and work carefully with community and educational leaders.

Innovator. There is much about rural education, indeed all of education, that is inimical to innovation. The conservative bent of many rural school boards and patrons would not seem to provide a fertile ground for innovation. On the other hand, in the small school situation, the innovator may have fewer people to motivate and less bureaucratic organization to overcome in order to introduce change. Rural school administrators who tend toward innovation should be avidly sought out by those who would foster change, particularly those innovative administrators who are respected and who are leaders.[39]

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[38]Havelock, op. cit., p. 80.

[39]Wood, op. cit., p. 24.

Defender. While the linking role of defender certainly has his place, it is apparent that such types are not in short supply in rural education.

Knowledge Builder. It has been suggested that among the reasons education has been comparatively slow to change is that the field lacks for applied researchers, developers, and R and D managers.[40] It has been further suggested that the field has need for "educational engineers" or "learning engineers."[41] Distasteful as these terms may seem to some, the point is made that we require linkage between research and practice. It is contended here that rural education has need for several types of linkers which would be categorized by Havelock under the rubric of knowledge builders.

Practitioners as Linkers. No particular hope is seen that practitioners in the field of education will, in the forseeable future, serve effectively in a linking role. Until such time as administrators and teachers are prepared and disposed to scan the research and development literature with a view to effecting change, practitioners in the field of rural education cannot be effective linkers.

Users as Linkers. Depending on the type of information to be used, the administrator, the teacher, or the pupil may be seen as the user. In none of these instances is it forseen that the user can effectively serve as linker.

On the basis of a consideration of Havelock's typology of linking

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[40] Ibid., pp. 85-88

[41] Ibid., p. 88

roles, it is suggested here that the linking types of consultant, trainer, leader, innovator and knowledge builder are of greatest strategical concern in effecting change in rural education. Those who would plan strategy to improve rural education should plan to make effective use of these types of linkers.

Change Strategies

Chin has projected a five category classification of change: substitution, alteration, perturbation and variation, restructuring, and value orientation change.[42] Substitution and alteration would involve alterations in the organizational equilibrium. Restructuring would involve significant reorganization while changes in value orientation would involve deep seated value changes. Howsam has suggested that educational change often involves changes of values. He stated that the educational innovator:

> ...has as his major task changing behaviors that are deep-rooted in the views of reality held by pupils, parents and educators.[43]

It may also be true that needed changes in rural education may necessitate some restructuring and not merely simple adjustments in present practice. Rowan Stutz has pointed out that rural education is unique and

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[42]Robert Chin, "Models of and Ideas About Changing in Media and Educational Innovation," Wesley C. Meirhenry, editor, (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska, 1963), pp. 1-22.

[43]Robert B. Howsam, "Effecting Needed Changes in Education," Planning and Effecting Needed Changes in Education, (Denver: Third Area Conference, Designing Education for the Future, June, 1967), pp. 70-71

requires unique solutions.[44] The conclusion to be drawn is that needed changes in rural education are not of a superficial type. They are extensive and deep-seated in nature.

Three general types of change strategies have been suggested by Chin. They are: (1) empirical-rational types, based on utilization of reason; (2) nominative-reeducative types, based on attitude changes; and (3) power types, based on forced compliance.[45] Strategies for change in rural education should reasonably be of the empirical-rational and the nominative-reeducative types, since it is questionable whether change agents will have access to power types of change strategy. Reason and persuasion would appear to be better strategies than force for effecting change.

Under the empirical-rational category, Chin has classified approaches to change employing linking systems, expert consultants, prophesying a future, and perceptual and conceptual reorganization.[46] It is to be noted that Chin places some confidence in the persuasive effect of a prophesy of how education will or should be in the future. He may be over-optimistic, but early results of the Eight-State Project, Designing Education for the Future, suggest that the force of intelligent prophesy is considerable.

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[44]Opinions of Rowan Stutz given in personal interview with George Bandy in Spokane, Washington, October 16, 1968.

[45]Robert Chin, "Basic Strategies and Procedures for Effecting Change," Planning and Effecting Needed Change in Education, (Denver: Third Area Conference, Designing Education for the Future, June 1967), p. 41.

[46]Ibid., pp. 44-48

Under the nominative-reeducative category, Chin includes problem-solving approaches and attitudinal change approaches.[47]

Guba has posited four stages in the theory-practice continuum: research, development, diffusion and adoption.[48] Guba asserts that by way of diffusion, the change agent can tell, show, help, involve, train, and intervene.[49] Acts of showing, helping, involving and training would seem to be better strategies for effecting change in rural education than would acts of telling or intervention.

Guba has also offered some assumptions about the nature of the practitioner who is to be exposed to change strategy. He views the practitioner as: rational, susceptible to logical argument; an untrained entity who can be taught to perform; a psychological entity who can be persuaded; an economic entity who can be compensated or deprived; a political entity who can be influenced; an entity in a bureaucratic system who can be compelled; and or a professional entity who can be obligated.[50] He terms these respectively: rational, didactic, psychological, economic, political, authority, and value.[51] It is here argued that change strategists would do well to emphasize logic, training, persuasion, and value over compensation and deprivation, political influence, or compulsion.

Three strategies for inducing change in education have been described

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[47] Ibid., pp. 48-50

[48] Guba, op. cit., p. 42

[49] Ibid., p. 48

[50] Ibid., p. 54

[51] Ibid.

by Sieber. They are: the rational man approach providing information through one-way communication; the cooperator approach which involves two-way communication; and the powerless participant approach which involves pressure and directives.[52] Of Sieber's strategies, that of the cooperator approach appears to be most promising.

To summarize some considerations or change strategies, it is here suggested that strategy for changing rural education should rely heavily on logic, reason, persuasion, showing, helping, involving, appeal to values and training, to the relative exclusion of telling, force, compulsion, intervention and deprivation.

The Change Agent

Several writers have called attention to the fact that education has need for change agents, professionals who are expert and whose sole function is that of managing desirable change. Carlson has suggested the need for an educational change agent somewhat along the lines of the county extension agent.[53] Chin has put the issue as follows:

> Indeed, since the input from the environment of the educational system is becoming so insistant, I suspect that there is justification for a rounded consultation team--from the state, from universities or from some other organization--to maintain the self-renewing properties of the school system.[54]

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[52]Sam D. Sieber, "Organizational Influences on Innovative Roles," Knowledge Production and Utilization in Educational Administration, Terry L. Eidell and Joanne M. Kitchell, editors, (Eugene: Center for the Advanced Study of Educational Administration, University of Oregon, 1968), pp. 136-138.

[53]Carlson, loc. cit.

[54]Chin, op. cit., p. 57.

Gallaher has suggested:

> An educational extension with a research program focused on creating alternatives and an action program to prepare change agents to assist school systems with innovation, dissemination, and integration problems is well worth considering.[55]

Universities have not provided a welcome haven for the linking agent. Extension agents have been viewed as second class citizens, applied researchers are held to be a cut below pure researchers, development specialists are somehow tainted. Mainly through the impact of federal funds, projects such as R and D centers, regional educational laboratories, dissemination centers, ERIC centers and the like, are serving in part as linking agents and change agents. But sophisticated strategies for improving rural education would require the training and deployment of change specialists.

The Northwest Regional Lab Plan for Diffusion

Program 400 of the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory relates to improvement of instruction in small schools. Officials of the lab have developed some Needed Assumptions for a Change Process Model Designed to Diffuse Educational Innovation is Sparsely Populated Areas.[56] These assumptions are pertinent to the discussion at hand. The assumptions along with related comments follow:

1. The need is cited for an instrument designed to identify a variety or mix of opinion leaders representing the total community including any minority groups.
2. The plan provides for the opinion leaders, termed vectors, and for the target site to be involved throughout the total change process.

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[55]Gallaher, op. cit., p. 51.

[56]Chester Hausken is Coordinator of Program 400, Improving Instruction in Small Schools; Walter Hartenberger is Staff Specialist.

3. Effective training in diagnostic process and task identification is needed for vectors and target sites.

The decision to involve opinion leaders (vectors) is wise. Some of the reasons have already been cited in this paper. The involvement of the vectors should serve to allay the fears of some rural educators and lay people. Pellegrin has stated, "It has been found repeatedly that there is a great deal of suspicion of sources of knowledge which are not known personally to the practitioner."[57] Pellegrin has also pointed out that:

> ...we have known for at least fifteen years...that change is introduced most effectively when the persons most effected by the change are involved heavily in the choice of alternative modes of problem solving.[58]

Local opinion leaders can assist change agents to understand the target community. Giammetteo states:

> Community change agents seeking change through cooperative approaches must read their local situation carefully. Circumstances will differ and will determine whether the prime emphasis of a given participating agency at a given time should be organizing the community, planning and research, training, or programmatic analysis of participants.[59]

Intimate involvement of local opinion leaders in the change process is strongly indicated.

4. Vectors need to initially work outside their immediate environment in fact or through simulation if the necessary risk taking attitudes are to be gained.

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[57]Pellegrin, op. cit., p. 40

[58]Ibid., p. 43

[59]Michael C. Giammetteo, Theoretical and Research Treatment of Community Organization and Interagency Cooperation, Field Paper No. 23, (Portland: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1968), p. 36.

5. Vectors need access to dual conditions.
   a. A community educationally similar to their own.
   b. A community similar demographically, but where desired innovations can be observed as optimum conditions.

There is considerable support in the literature for the decision to allow the vectors to work outside their immediate environment. Miles has written of the advantage of separating the innovation from the rest of the system as this lessens restraint against the innovation. He has also written of the need to establish communication channels between those in the temporary system and their counterparts in the permanent system.[60] Woods has cited the advantage of permitting teachers and others associated with schools to have opportunities for contact with people outside their own school districts.[61]

The decision to demonstrate the innovation in an environment other than the vectors' own is wise in that the element of risk is reduced. Hopefully, persons will become more open to the possibility of change if they have the opportunity to experience desirable change in a relatively risk-free environment. Pellegrin has cited the "need to demonstrate effective innovations so that persons for whom demonstrations are given regard them as credible."[62] Thus follows the assumption that the innovation should be observed at optimum conditions.

6. An innovation bank of validated and accessible progress must be available from the laboratory which vectors can draw on as they attempt to meet their identified needs.

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[60]Mathew Miles, Innovations in Education, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1964).

[61]Woods, op. cit., p. 20.

[62]Pellegrin, op. cit., p. 45.

A supply of validated innovations would seem to be a necessity, and this is, of course, one of the areas of interest to the Northwest Lab. Carlson declared that it is rare to find fully developed and tested innovations in education.[63] Havelock has written, "In education, even with the recently established R and D centers, the production of useful knowledge seems to be a pitiful trickle in proportion to the investment."[64] Hopefully, the situation will improve, for with all the current concern about change, there must be something solid to change toward.

7. Vectors and educators of target communities need training in evaluation. The training should be systematized and should be provided by an outside agency. Evaluation data must be accessible to the total community and understandable in localized lay terms.

We have already cited the concept that public education is not subject to the struggle for survival since it is "domesticated," neither choosing its clients nor running the risk of being without clients. A strong local effort among both educators and lay people to evaluate the educational program could provide a much needed stimulus to improve. In addition, the ability and desire to evaluate could serve to improve and perfect the "defender" type of linking function in that competent evaluators would be better able to thoroughly assess the merits of an innovation being considered for adoption.

8. Procedures for continued positive motivation are provided to the target site by the educational agency perceived to be the most respectable within the immediate region.

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[63]Carlson, op. cit., p. 5

[64]Havelock, op. cit., pp. 97-98

It is clear that the assumptions made by Northwest Lab personnel relative to change in rural schools have taken into account many of the concepts or ideas discussed in this paper. The Northwest Lab seems to see the problem largely in terms of people. Howsam would agree. He wrote:

> When we are ready to invest as much in personnel development as we are in technology and program development we may begin to release the talents of those who work in our own educational institutions.[65]

It is the opinion of this writer that any viable plan for change in rural education must be built on the principle of releasing the talents of the local practitioners. Throughout education we are only beginning to learn to tap the talents of people. This would seem to be our basic task in improving rural education.

Dissemination of the Findings of the Rural Shared Services Project

During the past nine months, the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has conducted a study of shared services in rural schools in the United States. Frank Heesacker of Northern Montana College was involved in the study. Some of you have heard Dr. Heesacker report at this conference.[66]

Phase II of this project, if funded, provides for dissemination of

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[65]Howsam, op. cit., p. 80.

[66]Frank Heesacker and Ray Jongeward, A Report of Rural Shared Services. A report prepared for the Research Utilization Branch, U. S. Office of Education, April, 1969.

research results.[67] Assuming the results are worth disseminating, and assuming a limited budget with which to operate, the question is, how can the results be disseminated nationally to non-research audiences of rural and county school board members, small school administrators, state education departments, legislators, and community opinion leaders?

The dissemination proposal as it now stands, involves the following features:

1. Identification of a five-state region of the five states of South Dakota, Nebraska, Montana, Wyoming, and North Dakota for concentrated dissemination efforts. These five states were selected because they are contiguous and because they were the five highest on the basis of a rurality index developed by Heesacker (Alaska excluded).
2. Preparation of materials including brochures and fact sheets, slide/tape presentation kits, advertisements for newspapers and periodicals, news releases, slides and scripts, or television releases. Brochures and fact sheets, and advertisements for newspapers and periodicals will be disseminated nationally. All materials are to be disseminated in the five-state area.
3. Visitations will be made to each of the five states to identify leaders in:
   a. State education departments.
   b. Colleges and universities.
   c. School board associations.
   d. Professional associations.
   e. Legislative interim committees.
   f. All existing shared service programs.
   g. Radio and television broadcasting.
   h. Newspapers.
4. Cooperation will be sought from the identified leaders to assist in the dissemination process. Permission will be sought to disseminate through journals and newsletters of professional organizations and other groups interested in education.
5. Time to discuss shared services will be sought at conventions, conferences, and institues in the five states.

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[67]Since the date this paper was delivered at the NFIRE Convention in Denver, March 19, Phase II projected has been funded to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and is presently (April 10) at the stage of negotiation.

6. Institutions of higher education nominated as most likely to have an interest in rural education will be visited with a view to identifying key personnel, securing their cooperation, and encouraging and assisting them to design shared services orientation programs within their service regions.
7. Continuous consultant service will be provided to the identified persons and organizations to assist them in dissemination and in planning shared service activities.
8. Invitations will be sought by project staff to make presentations to national conferences which have some interest in rural education.
9. Definite plans will be formulated to encourage other agencies to continue the dissemination process after the termination of Phase II of this project.

Conclusions

Change in rural education has been slow to occur. Attention to change strategies can hasten the process. Strategies for change in rural education should account for intelligent use of linking agents. Attention should be given to the training and deployment of linking agents in education. Insofar as change in rural education is concerned, change agents should emphasize logic, training, persuasion, and demonstration of value over compensation and deprivation, political influence, or compulsion. At least the hope is maintained that the above preferenced motivating factors will suffice to promote needed change in rural education. Perhaps this writer is optimistic in assuming that meaningful change in rural education can or will occur short of legislative mandate. It must be remembered, however, that even if legislative mandate proves to be necessary, some strategies will be required to change the thinking of rural legislators.